



Clean Air Standards

The Clean Air Act established two types of national air quality standards. Primary standards set limits to protect public health, including the health of “sensitive” populations such as children, elderly and those with respiratory illnesses. Secondary standards set limits to protect public welfare, including protection against decreased visibility, damage to animals, crops, vegetation and buildings.

New Standards

In 1997, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established new health-based standards for ground-level **ozone** and fine particulate matter. Extensive scientific review showed that the changes were necessary to protect public health and the environment. However, the new standards were challenged in court. In May 1999, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit declared that the new standards are not enforceable. Therefore, the standards cannot be implemented at this time. However, the U.S. EPA appealed most of this decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. Arguments were heard Nov. 7, 2000, and a decision is expected in spring 2001.

Fine Particulate Matter: PM_{2.5} versus PM₁₀

In revising the air quality standards, the U.S. EPA created new standards for **PM_{2.5}** (particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter). The U.S. EPA’s scientific review concluded that fine particles (**PM_{2.5}**), which penetrate deeply into the lungs, are more damaging to human health than the

coarse particles known as **PM₁₀**. Fine particles are more likely than coarse particles to contribute to such health effects as premature death, increased hospital admissions and emergency visits, especially for the elderly and individuals with cardiopulmonary disease. Coarse particles can accumulate in the respiratory system and aggravate health problems such as asthma.

Air Quality Monitors in Missouri

In 2000, the Missouri Air Pollution Monitoring Network included 111 monitors of three types: national monitors, state and local agency monitors and special-purpose monitors. National monitors have been established to provide data on national trends. State and local agencies operate permanent monitors to measure ambient concentrations of those pollutants for which **National Ambient Air Quality Standards** have been set. Special-purpose monitors are placed to gather representative data as well as worst-case occurrences. Data is also being collected at 44 meteorological monitors operating throughout the state. The data collected at these monitors are used for analysis and modeling purposes.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards

CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANT	AVERAGING TIME	PRIMARY STANDARD	SECONDARY STANDARD	HEALTH EFFECTS
Carbon Monoxide	Eight-hour maximum ^a	9 ppm (10 mg/m ³)	None	Impaired vision and manual dexterity, weakness and mental dullness. At high levels: vomiting, fast pulse and breathing, followed by slow pulse and breathing, then collapse and unconsciousness.
	One-hour maximum ^b	35 ppm ^d (40 mg/m ³) ^c	None	
Lead	Maximum Quarterly Arithmetic Mean	1.5 µg/m ³	Same As Primary Standard	Low doses damage the central nervous system of children and unborn infants, causing seizures, mental retardation and behavioral disorders. In children and adults lead causes fatigue, disturbed sleep, decreased fitness and damage to kidneys, liver and blood-forming organs. High levels damage the nervous system and cause seizures, coma and death.
Nitrogen Dioxide	Annual Arithmetic Mean	0.05 ppm (100 µg/m ³)	Same As Primary Standard	Lung inflammation and lower resistance to infections like bronchitis and pneumonia. Suspected of causing acute respiratory diseases in children.
Ozone	One-hour average ^b	0.12 ppm (235 µg/m ³)	Same As Primary Standard	Throat irritation, congestion, chest pains, nausea and labored breathing. Aggravation of existing lung or heart conditions, allergies and asthma-. Ozone is especially harmful to those who work or play outside. Ozone is also harmful to plant life, damaging forests and reducing crop yields.
Particulate Matter (PM₁₀)	Annual Arithmetic Mean	50 µg/m ³	Same As Primary Standard	Increased likelihood of chronic or acute respiratory illness. Difficulty breathing, aggravation of existing respiratory or cardiovascular illness and lung damage.
	24-hour average ^f	150 µg/m ³		
Sulfur Dioxide	Annual Arithmetic Mean	0.03 ppm (80 µg/m ³)	0.5 ppm (1300 µg/m ³)	Irritation of throat and lungs with difficulty in breathing. Aggravation of existing respiratory or cardiovascular illness.
	24-hour maximum ^a	0.14 ppm (365 µg/m ³)		
	Three-hour maximum ^b			

^a Not to be exceeded more than once a year for primary and secondary standards.

^b Not to be exceeded more than once a year for primary and secondary standards.

^c mg/m³ = milligrams per cubic meter.

^d ppm = part per million.

^e g/m³ = micrograms per cubic meter.

^f Established for a three-year average of the 99th percentile of data.

^g Established for a three-year average.

^h Established for a three-year average of the 98th percentile of data.